

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DOHA 00326 141214Z
ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----141242Z 022636 /43

R 140955Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2409
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT BAGHDAD
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 0326

FOR THE SECRETARY

DEPT ALSO FOR UNDER SECY HABIB AND NEA ASST SECY ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, XF, US
SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR VISIT OF HIGH LEVEL USG OFFICIAL TO GULF/
PENINSULA AREA

REF: (A) DOHA 280; (B) ABU DHABI 658; (C) MANAMA 515; (D) MUSCAT 346;
(E) KUWAIT 1225; (F) SANA 909

1. I APPRECIATE MY COLLEAGUES' COMMENTS ON MY PROPOSAL FOR
VISIT OF HIGH LEVEL USG OFFICIAL TO GULF/PENINSULA AREA, THEIR
SUGGESTIONS RE TIMING, AND CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY IMPORTANT
BILATERAL MATTERS, PARTICULARLY IN BAHRAIN AND OMAN.

2. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT VISIT SHOULD BE MADE, AND SOONER
RATHER THAN LATER TO MAXIMIZE BENEFITS TO US INTERESTS. THERE
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HAS BEEN MENTION OF COSMETIC AS OPPOSED TO SUBSTANTIVE IMPACT
OF VISIT. COSMETICS ARE SUBSTANCE IN ARAB WORLD WHERE APPEAR-
ANCES ARE OFTEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN REALITY. SHOW OF INTEREST
IN FORM OF VISIT WILL BE SEEN AS SUBSTANTIVE GESTURE IN ITSELF,
INDEPENDENT OF OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

3. FURTHER RE TIMING, THE EARLIER THE BETTER, APRIL IF POSSIBLE,

SO THAT WE CAN CAPITALIZE ON INNOVATIVE IMAGE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ELAN OF NEW ADMINISTRATION. THE SHINE WILL BE OFF BY MID-SUMMER, AND CERTAINLY BY FALL; IN ANY CASE A SUMMER VISIT NOT LIKELY TO FIND MANY OF AREA'S LUMINARIES AT HOME. (LOCAL PRESS CARRIED STORY LAST WEEK THAT SECRETARY WOULD VISIT KUWAIT DURING HIS NEXT MID EAST TRIP IN JULY.)

4. IN ADDITION, TIMELY FOLLOW-UP TO PRESIDENT'S INAUGURAL REMARKS THAT WE DON'T KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS AND ARE SEEKING ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE OF OUR FRIENDS ON PROBLEMS THAT CONCERN BOTH THEM AND US WILL MAKE CREDIBLE OUR DECLARED OPENNESS TO VIEWS OF OTHERS. IF WE ARE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN CONSULTATIONS, THE TIME TO CONSULT IS NOW WHILE WE ARE DEVELOPING OUR OWN IDEAS AND NOT RPT NOT AFTER THIS IS DONE. PREVIOUS AND RESENTED PATTERN HAS BEEN TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT WE HAVE DETERMINED TO DO, VERY OFTEN AFTER WE HAVE DONE IT. SOLICITING INPUT FROM AREA LEADERS AT THIS TIME, IN PARALLEL WITH CONSULTATIONS WITH VIP'S OF CONFRONTATION COUNTRIES IN WASHINGTON, CAN ADD TO OUR DATA BASE. MORE IMPORTANTLY IT CAN ALSO SERVE TO SHAPE VIEWS OF SMALLER STATES' LEADERS, SOME OF WHOSE POWER OF PURSE AND CONTROL OF ENERGY RESOURCES COULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT AND ENERGY PROBLEMS. WE SHOULD GET TO THE BANKROLLING OIL SHAYKHS NOW, AND NOT WAIT UNTIL POSSIBLE SUMMER/FALL CRUNCH ON ME NEGOTIATIONS AND OIL PRICES. (AS AMBASSADOR SCOTES HAS POINTED OUT, WE SHOULD NOT CONSIDER OUR CLOSENESS TO SAUDIS AS ADEQUATE SUBSTITUTE FOR DIRECT CONTACT WITH OTHER GULF/PENINSULA LEADERS.) THIS DOES NOT PRECLUDE FOLLOW-UP VISITS LATER AS TIME FOR DECISIONS ON THESE MATTERS APPROACHES--INDEED THIS WOULD BE NATURAL IF WE SERIOUS ABOUT CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS.

5. IN SUM, CONCERN THAT TOP LEVEL US ENVOY ON EARLY VISIT TO AREA WOULD COME EMPTY-HANDED IS NOT THE POINT. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT HE COME NOW, AND THAT HE BE SEEN AS COMING OPEN-HANDED, OPEN-MINDED AND OPEN-HEARTED. RE BILATERAL CONSIDERATIONS POINTED OUT BY AMBASSADORS CLUVERIUS AND WOLLE, SCHEDULING OF EARLY VISIT COULD HELP TO CATALYZE WASHINGTON ACTION SO THAT ENVOY WOULD BE ABLE TO ADVANCE SOLUTION OF THESE PROBLEMS.
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